

While I understand that there are several proposals open for discussion at this time, I will limit my comments to RM-10809 since it most closely equals my own opinions.

First, I agree with a 3-tiered licensing system:

The Technician class license allows easy entry into Amateur Radio and provides the basis for future advancement if desired. Many operators are content to operate the local repeaters and do nothing else. I agree with eliminating Element 1 as an option to the Technician license and would prohibit Technicians from operating on the HF bands.

I see the General class license as the standard for Amateur Radio operators. Since the governing bodies have spoken and other countries of the world are removing knowledge of CW as a requirement for HF communications, I support the removal of Morse Code testing as a requirement for General class licensing while maintaining current privileges. This would allow operators to experiment with and hopefully learn to use Morse Code at their leisure. I also support the suggestion to make the test more thorough.

Finally, I see the Extra class license the ultimate to which an Amateur can aspire. The written test should be very thorough and quite difficult. Also, since the Extra Class license is the ultimate class and should indicate that the holder of the license is knowledgeable of all aspects of Amateur Radio, I favor maintaining the current 5 wpm requirements for this class.

It has been argued that Morse Code is simply another mode, and that if this mode is tested all modes on which the licensee operates should be tested. This argument does not consider that other digital modes are strictly hardware or software driven and do not require human interpretation of the transmitted and received signal. While Morse Code can be transmitted by machine, and in some cases received by machine, it requires human knowledge and skill when receiving under marginal conditions.

This proposal states and I agree that 5 wpm is an impractical speed for serious communication. Other proposals have suggested a higher speed of 15 wpm for the Extra class. I believe 15 wpm as an entry speed would present an almost impenetrable barrier to advancement and therefore recommend the 5 wpm speed. Operators with an interest in Morse Code operation will automatically force themselves to higher speeds with practice.

While inclusion or exclusion of Morse Code testing is, of course, an emotionally charged issue, it seems many long time licensees wish to use code testing simply as a barrier to advancement. It is unfortunate that these licensees had to work longer and harder to earn the same privileges as new licensees, but it is inevitable that we all must adapt to changing times and practices.

The Commission has received ample proposals, comments, arguments and rebuttals. It is time for the Commission to act on this matter so we can try to quit bickering and move forward with Amateur Radio.

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